



FROM the FIELD

A guidance counsellor who is also a FSL teacher shares strategies for encouraging FSL pathway options such as:

- Focusing mostly on the grade 9 students as they are the future of the French program. “If you can hook them in grade 9, then you have a good chance of keeping them.”
- Inviting exchange students to visit the class on a regular basis.
- Promoting the exchange program with students as they are more likely to continue to take French if they complete an exchange.
- Organizing trips with cultural opportunities such as French restaurants, plays, and bookstores.

Substitutions and Exemptions

School policies concerning substitutions and exemptions clearly impact individual student pathways. Policy/Program memorandum (PPM) No. 58 that provided for the possibility of individual exemptions was revoked in 2004. The 2014 secondary FSL curriculum policy supports a differentiated approach to teaching and learning where an understanding of each individual student’s strengths and needs will help teachers plan effective instruction for all.

Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs invites boards to review their local procedures and practices regarding exemptions and substitutions for FSL programs. Are students’ individual strengths, needs and interests taken into consideration when program decisions are being made?

Transitions and Career / Life Planning

It is important to include FSL in conversations regarding transitions and career/ life planning. *Creating Pathways to Success* outlines policies and processes to guide schools in creating comprehensive programs. The “All About Me” portfolio (Kindergarten to Grade 6) and the Individual Pathways Plan (Grades 7 to 12) provide a structure for student/parent/teacher conferencing as well as documentation to support ongoing planning at home and at school. Students need to consider such questions as:

Why is learning French important to me? How does French fit into my goals? Can I foresee how I might need French in the future? How can it broaden my opportunities?

Experiential Learning including Cooperative Education

Experiential learning connected to a community provides students an opportunity to deepen their understanding by applying their learning in various settings outside of the classroom. Cooperative education is an example of experiential learning available to FSL students. Students develop and come to recognize their strengths, interests and skills with respect to expectations in a community or workplace. Students gain a better understanding of the advantages of FSL pathway options and how these relate to education and career/ life planning. These experiences in FSL allow students to apply and extend knowledge and skills in exciting and meaningful contexts that render the language pertinent and applicable to their real lives as they explore education and career/life options.

The messages that students and families receive during transitions and educational planning have a significant impact on participation in FSL. School staff are encouraged to examine transitions and course selection processes, timetabling practices, and experiential learning experiences including cooperative education in order to provide all students with access to FSL learning opportunities.

One article to read, one quote to consider, one link to click...

1. ***Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs: A Guide for Ontario Schools*** (2015). This document serves as a companion to *A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013* by providing additional research, data and examples of inclusive practice. It focuses on ways to make all FSL programs more available to students with special education needs and on the supports these students need to succeed.
2. **“Planned learning experiences in the community, including job shadowing and job twinning, field trips, work experience, and cooperative education, provide students with opportunities to see the relevance of their classroom learning in a work setting, make connections between school and work, and explore a career of interest as they plan their pathway through secondary school and on to their postsecondary destination.”** (*The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: French as a Second Language – Core, Extended and Immersion French, 2014*, p. 54)
3. ***Supporting Students in FSL:*** A resource released in **September 2015** for principals and vice principals including a video for self-reflection and a second video to support principals in their ongoing dialogue with special education and guidance educators. Of particular note, a guidance counsellor speaks directly about the strategies she uses in the promotion of FSL at the secondary level.
<https://transformingfsl.ca/en/resources/from-awareness-to-action-resources-for-principals-and-vice-principals/>

